10/20/2015
87th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial
By: Tom Wiknich

What do you think is the biggest threat to America compared with our presidential candidates’ stated fears?

First, a couple final comments about two past editorials, as they are still causing quite a bit of discussion on the blogs: More talk about mental illness associated with guns.

There have been so many comments, I’ll just summarize today. Not surprisingly, the differences between comments are based on two main theories:

1.  Guns are the problem and more gun control is needed.

2.  Keeping mentally unstable people away from things such as guns so they can’t kill people.

Some people believe we can pass more gun control laws that will stop mass shootings like at the recent school shooting. I don’t agree with that. My position is guns are not the problem, just as knives, baseball bats, cars, or whatever some may think is the problem. The problem is passing a law that enables the gun background check system to check mental status of potential buyers. This would require involvement of the law makers, the medical professionals, and constitutional lawyers to come together to get rid of that part of the background check system that doesn’t work now.

Now, today’s topic: What do you think is the biggest threat to America compared with our presidential candidates’ stated fears?

I chose this topic because of the story I just ran at the beginning of this newscast. It was the story about Chapman University doing a survey of American fears this year. It provides an interesting look into the fears of average Americans. A random sampling of more than 1,500 adults from across the united states were asked to rate their level of fear about eighty-eight different fears across a huge variety of topics. The topics included crime, the government, disasters, personal anxieties, technology and many others. They were asked to rate their level of fear on a scale ranging from 1 (not afraid) to 4 (very afraid).

The top five were: Government corruption (58); Cyber terrorism (45); Corporate tracking personal data (45); Terrorist attack (44); and Government tracking personal data (41). Did you notice two of the top five feared our own government, another two of them concerned some form of terrorism, and the remaining one was fear of corporation doing the same thing the government does.

I have to compare these fears with the last presidential debates. I will start with the Democratic debate last week. The moderator asked them what they thought was the biggest threat to the United States. The moderators didn’t ask that clear question to the Republican debate, but they should have. The questions in the Republican debate were more intended to get the candidates to attack each other, instead of asking questions on the issues. In the Republican debate, they all cited ISIS, extremist Islamic terrorists, and Iran, as a big threat to us. That matches the survey response for the two of the top five highest fear categories: the fear of terrorist attack and cyber terrorism. Now, back to what Democrats fear the most, as compared to this survey. Four of the five democratic candidates said global warming as our biggest threat. The Chapman study had the people rate the fear of global warming at 21 on the list, with 30% fearing it. Only one Democratic candidate mirrored the people in this study with his fear of terrorism and ISIS crisis in the Middle East as the biggest fear. Another huge charge four of the five Democrat candidates was their fear of the NRA, and the crowd cheered their comments that the NRA has to be stopped. I have to say, the NRA doesn’t even show up on the list of fears, yet fear of gun control does show up as the peoples 11th highest fear. Their fear of gun control was even above categories such as: war, Obamacare, nuclear attacks, and civil unrest. One interesting fear as expressed by Republican candidate Donald Trump was illegal immigration. This topic was also on the list; it came in as the 23rd highest fear at 30%. In contrast, the Democrats have no fear of illegal immigration, or I’m sorry, undocumented residents, as they prefer to call them. We can’t use the term illegal or alien anymore. Some sad categories were the fear of illness, loneliness, and dying. This is a real fear for many people, and one we should pay attention to, as to our family, friends, and neighbors in their time of need. Another fear way down on the list was the fear of mass shootings; 16% fear that possibility. I remind everyone of one fear I mentioned in the story earlier, the fear of zombies. Really, some people fear an unreal horror fabrication, zombies; 8½ % have a fear of zombies. There was also a fear of ghosts by almost 10% of the people. There are a lot of unexplained things in history that lead many to believe in ghosts. A surprising category that didn’t make the list was a fear of aliens/extraterrestrials.

A comparison of the presidential debates, it seems by the numbers that the Republicans were somewhat closer to the people in the survey by a rather large amount. The Democrats came in with the mid to lower ranges of the people in the Chapman survey, with the exception of two of the top five categories, that being fear of the government in two ways: government corruption and the government tracking personal information. There was also the fear of private industry tracking personal information. I think most, but not all, of the candidates have some agreement of these fears. The difference though would be differing approaches by the two parties to solve the fears. That discussion would be another whole topic by itself. I’d like to thank Chapman University for this study. It was eye opening, and it was fun to compare it to the current candidates. What is also interesting is that some of the top fears do have political solutions. It just remains to be seen if our politicians can fix them. Having one top contender under investigation for illegal email use, and lying about it, doesn’t help the perception of stopping government corruption. For someone out there that would criticize me for picking on Clinton, if you have information of any of the other current candidates being under legal investigation for breaking any laws, let me know. I’ll include that with any comments I get on this editorial.

In conclusion, comparing the people’s fears to the two parties was interesting. It would appear that the Republicans are much closer to the people’s ratings in this study than the Democratic candidates.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.